

*Our River...*

*A Vision for  
Greater Downtown Eugene*



*...Our Downtown*



*Final Report  
November 2000*

GEORGE PARK 1.50 J.  
ROSENA MYERS  
5.50 J.

A. L. FRAZER

F. M. WILKINS

O. GREEN  
4.00 A.

O. GR  
8.0

25.00 A.

# Greater Downtown Visioning Project Participants

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## Committee for Greater Downtown Visioning

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Hugh Prichard, Co-Chair  
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Russ Brink (Ex Officio Member)  
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Community Planning Workshop

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### *City of Eugene Public Works*

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### *Lane Transit District*

Stefano Viggiano  
Lisa Gardner

### *Eugene Water & Electric Board*

Debra Brewer

## Project Participants

Workshop Participants and Volunteers  
Family School (Patterson Elementary) 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Visitors to the "Virtual Galleries"



Governor Kitzhaber and his staff are led on a tour of downtown Eugene by Nancy Nathanson, City Councilor and Co-chair of the Visioning Committee.

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*A Vision for  
Greater Downtown Eugene*

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November, 2000*

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# The Story of Eugene...

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*Looking south along  
Willamette Street,  
Eugene's historic  
"Great Street,"  
ca. 1915.*

Eugene Skinner founded his city on the river, at the south end of the fertile Willamette Valley. Early on, the city established itself as the center of the region for commerce, education, industry and culture. Downtown Eugene became the place that people came to, for business, for entertainment and for celebration. It was the place that people dressed up to go to, the "special place" in the city, the heart of the community.

Change is inevitable. The city has grown away from the river, and its industrial and agricultural heritage. The 1980's was a period of disinvestment, with stores leaving downtown, and employment opportunities dwindling. The economy has rebounded throughout the last decade, and employment in the downtown has significantly increased. Now there are many choices for business, shopping and entertainment. People are choosing to come downtown, to be a part of the activity of the city, to experience history and culture in a way that a shopping mall cannot provide.

The last plan for downtown was developed in 1984. The plan reflected the issues and the challenges of that time. Much has been accomplished since then. Significant private and public investment has occurred downtown, in housing, infrastructure, employment opportunities, buildings such as EWEB, U.S. Bank, the downtown transit station, the new public library... the list is long.

Many of the issues and choices addressed in the 1984 plan remain, including access to the river, treatment of Broadway, connection to Skinner Butte and the train station. Many new possibilities and decisions now affect how we might approach those diverse issues, including growth management, Bus Rapid Transit, growing investor confidence, and the listing of salmon as an endangered species.

The Greater Downtown Visioning Project is a critical step in the transition of downtown Eugene into a vibrant city on the river. The emerging vision promotes a dense variety of intermingled activities within the greater downtown neighborhood. It is a place with inviting, safe and lively streets. A diverse mix of retail, entertainment, civic and residential uses creates an energy that enlivens the streets. A larger and higher density residential population provides a demand for further development of retail, office space, cultural and entertainment opportunities. Pedestrians feel safe as they conduct business, play or make their way... day and night.

The vision entails enhanced visual and physical connections between downtown, Franklin Boulevard, the University of Oregon and the Willamette River. A network of public open spaces provides opportunities for rest and reflection amid all the activity. The vision unites the civic center of Eugene and the natural environment of the Willamette River.

This aspirational vision for the Greater Downtown area springs out of community values. Its purpose is to direct and encourage the transition of an area with great potential to a successful, thriving, active urban community with close ties to an environmental heritage and a rich river resource. Our vision for this area seeks to build upon its assets and to increase its value as a place to live, work, do business and play.

A vision is somewhere between a memory and a map, a picture of where we are and where we want to be. To be successful, the vision for downtown has to help us make choices, and inspire investor confidence. Investing means not just directing financial capital, but time, talent, and a commitment to our community. We invite you to be a part of this effort, to invest your time and energy in our everchanging, ever-evolving downtown.

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*“The logical future, determined by past and present conditions, is less important than the willed future, which is largely brought about by human choice.”*

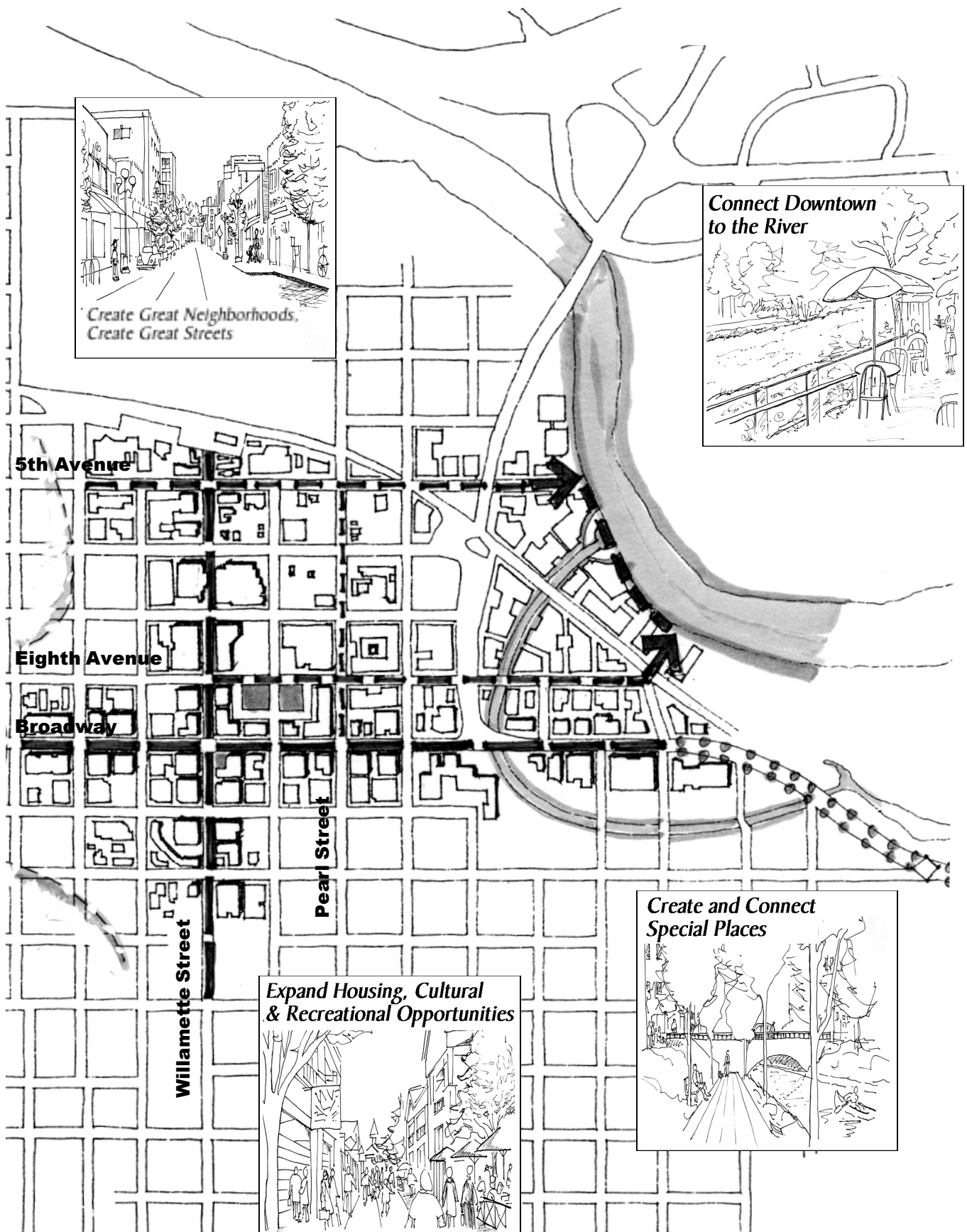
*- Rene Dubos, 20th century American scientist*

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*Looking south along the Willamette River.*

# A Vision for Greater Downtown Eugene...

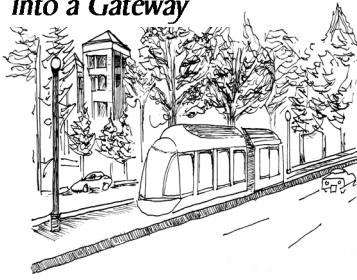


...a vibrant core with a connection to the river. Eighth Avenue, the Civic Street, and the opened Millrace create powerful connections between downtown and an urban waterfront. Great Streets pass through the heart of downtown, creating market vitality, a sense of place and civic pride. A scenic boulevard enters the downtown from the east, creating a memorable gateway. Dense mixed development frames the downtown and creates a transition to vital neighborhoods.

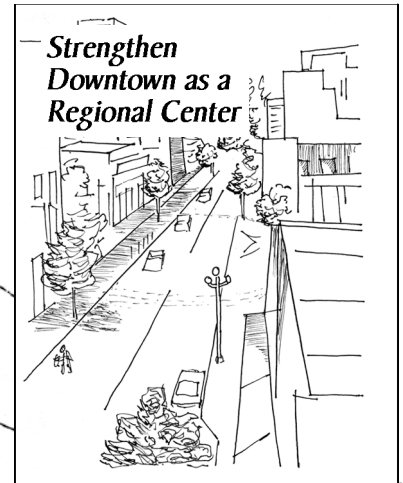
***Capitalize on Development Opportunities***



***Transform Franklin Boulevard into a Gateway***



***Strengthen Downtown as a Regional Center***



# Project Background

In November 1999, Eugene City Council approved a charge for the Downtown/Franklin Boulevard/Willamette River Visioning Project, and in February 2000, an assignment of committee members. The Council-appointed committee met eight times between April and November 2000 to engage in discussions of physical issues and solutions within the study area. In June, the Visioning Project sponsored an all-day community workshop to solicit public comment on the creation of an image-based vision for the Greater Downtown area. The workshop provided an opportunity for nearly 200 citizens to work with local and regional design professionals to sketch out some key ideas and solutions for the study area.

The project also sponsored other public events, including two “virtual galleries” during the First Friday Art Walk to present downtown images to the public. These galleries displayed maps of the Greater Downtown area, historic downtown images, design work from the University of Oregon School of Architecture and children’s ideas about downtown. The project also sponsored a display of downtown images at the Eugene Celebration. This document is based on the work of the committee and citizen ideas from the visioning workshop and related activities.

The vision reflected in this document is not entirely new or without context. The vision is based not only on the committee’s work, but also on the collective wisdom of the community, including the products of other previous and current planning efforts. These past planning efforts and studies have also focused on similar ideas - returning to the river, uncovering the Millrace, celebrating our historic streets.

The 1984 Downtown Plan highlighted Broadway and Eighth Avenue as key streets, and conceived of a public place along the river. This plan was the result of significant public involvement and has been the primary document guiding development in the downtown for the last sixteen years. This plan also resulted in significant physical changes for Eugene’s downtown, including a major public plaza at EWEB and connections to an extensive system of bike and pedestrian paths along the river.



*Participants at the June 24th Visioning Workshop.*

## **Committee’s Charge**

To recommend an aspirational and pragmatic vision for the refinement and development of the Downtown, Franklin Boulevard and Willamette Riverfront areas. The committee’s recommendations are to be conveyed to the City Council by the end of the calendar year. The committee’s recommendations will focus on the following:

- A vision for the area addressing the physical form and functions, market potential, access and transportation features, civic design and amenities, possible districts within the study area and role of primary environmental features, such as the Willamette River.
- A narrative diagram and supporting graphics that effectively communicate the recommended vision.
- An identification of important opportunity areas, suggested strategies and priority next steps to realize the vision.
- Conscientious use of the City’s Growth Management Policies for the downtown.



The Riverfront Research Park Study, completed in 1986, envisioned a partnership between the University and the City for intense development of an area along the river southeast of EWEB. This vision, which was the basis for the plan, has resulted in significant economic and urban development in the riverfront area.

The City's Growth Management Study, completed in 1998, reaffirmed the City's commitment to the concept of compact urban growth and the importance of the downtown in achieving a compact form.

The South Bank Study, a visioning project from 1994, included conceptual sketches for the opening of the Millrace, and resulted in improvements to the Ferry Street Corridor.

The current visioning project has also drawn ideas and clarity from other recent and ongoing efforts. Recommendations related to the Park Blocks are coordinated with the work of the City's Park Blocks Placemaking Committee, which completed its work in the summer of 2000. The Visioning Committee's recommendations for Franklin Boulevard are reflective of the design charrettes and ongoing design work of the Bus Rapid Transit project.

All of these efforts and ideas have contributed to the elements of the current vision. The community has been talking about these elements for the past twenty years. It is time to take the steps to make them happen, to create the community that we see in our memory, and in our imagination.



*"A Downtown Trolley"  
Patterson/Family School Fifth  
Grade ideas for downtown.*



*Conceptual sketch from the June 24th Visioning Workshop.*

# Create Great Neighborhoods, Create Great Streets

*Broadway, open to cars, bikes and pedestrians, becomes an active market street.*

"Great Streets" are safe, convenient and interesting places. They typically feature multi-story residential and office development, energized with retail, restaurant and other visually-appealing activities on the ground floor. Great Streets are pedestrian-oriented in design and appearance, but allow bicycle and slow-moving automobile traffic and on-street parking. Great Streets transcend the task of just moving traffic, and flourish as destinations. The Great Streets of Eugene are the streets of which the community is most proud. We choose to walk along these streets; we come back to them.



To realize the vision of Great Streets, strategic actions should be taken to enhance the key streets in the downtown as Great Streets. Broadway, the core market street, should be opened to accommodate all modes of transportation, with a predominately pedestrian character and enhanced public spaces. The redesign should honor the unique role of this street with a celebration plaza and public venue for such events as Eugene Celebration and First Night. Willamette Street, the historic main street, should be enhanced and a visual connection to Skinner Butte restored between the Hult Center/Hilton Hotel. Fifth Avenue should be strengthened as a historic market district, with a pedestrian connection to the Willamette River.

The Great Streets need to connect major parts of town to create a pleasurable walking experience between them. Access to nearby transit, such as Bus Rapid Transit or the downtown shuttle, provides another critical element and contributes to the success of the Great Street.

The vision calls for the enhancement of Eighth Avenue as the primary "Civic Street" and a prime connection to the river. Eighth should be enhanced as a ceremonial street and should serve as the address for important future civic buildings. Eighth Avenue should also provide direct access to the river with an intersection crossing at Mill Street.



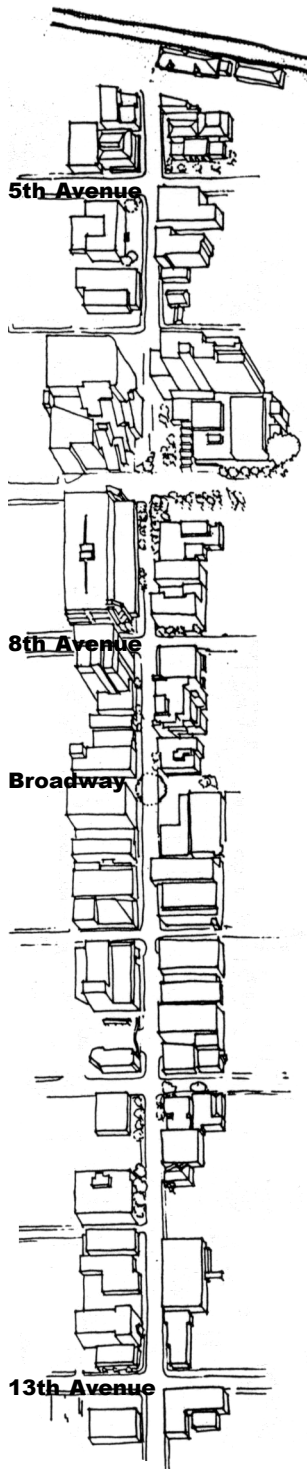
*The vision calls for the enhancement of a few key streets as "Great Streets" in the downtown.*



*Lane County Courthouse, 1915.*

*"We need to set an example of great architecture with public buildings... the library, city hall, courthouse..."*

*Citizen comment, June 24th Visioning Workshop*



*An axonometric sketch of Willamette Street, looking north.*

*“Great Streets are not just pleasant streets to be on... they are also landmarks. Part of what makes them great is their connection to places that are important in the history of our community.”*

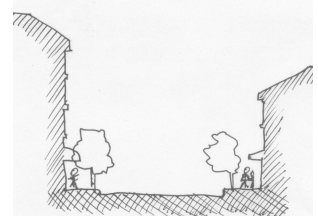
*Nancy Nathanson, Visioning Committee Co-Chair*

## Key Next Steps

- Transform Broadway (between Lincoln and the river) and Willamette (between train station and Thirteenth) into “Great Streets.” Tools to consider: an overlay zone requiring active street level uses, design guidelines.
- Create a design to open Broadway from Oak to Charnelton which would allow for use of all modes of transportation and emphasizes pedestrian character and enhanced public spaces.
- Evolve Eighth Avenue (between Oak and the river) into the key “Civic Street.” Encourage significant new public buildings to locate along Eighth Avenue, including the police station and the Federal Courthouse.
- Encourage Fifth Avenue to continue its development as a retail street.
- Create a new zoning district for the downtown that promotes multi-story structures with mixed uses, and emphasizes street-level activity along the Great Streets. Consider design review.



*East Broadway is an interesting, engaging street - a street that people seek out, and choose to be on.*



*A “Great Street” is created by buildings which frame the public space.*

# Create and Connect Special Places

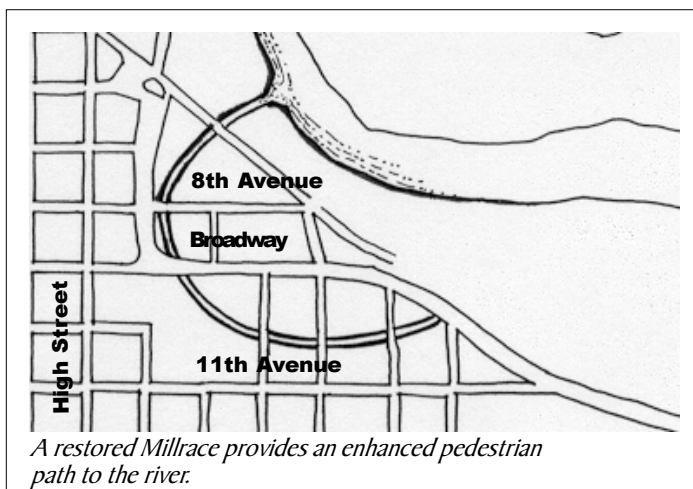
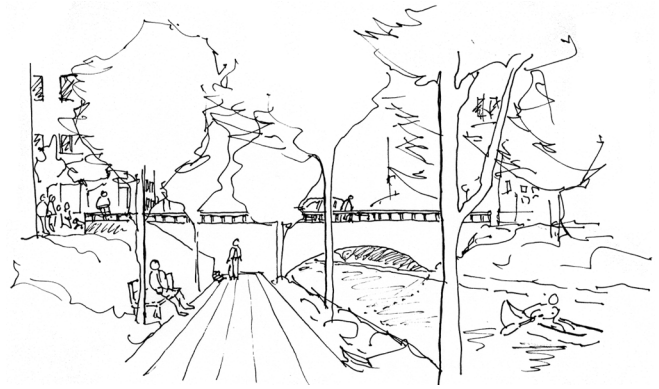
## *Open the Millrace... Create a path to the river.*

Special things happen downtown — the Farmer's Market, the Saturday Market, the Eugene Celebration, the Bach Festival, Friday Art Walks — not necessarily every day, but with enough frequency that city residents take delight in them and plan for them. Over time, these special events and places become our strongest downtown memories. Downtown is also a collection of special places, including Fifth Street Market, train station, Hult Center and Park Blocks.

These special places should be easily accessible to all, linked by all modes of transportation, and offering interesting uses, features, or activities along the way.

The vision recognizes the need to create and further develop special places within downtown and to connect them in a way that is easy to understand and to navigate. A restored, daylighted Millrace would create a special pedestrian link between the river and the downtown. Actions to reestablish and strengthen the visual connection between Skinner Butte and Spencer Butte would reinforce one of the most familiar and understandable features of the downtown form. Strategies to maintain the Park Blocks as the ceremonial heart of the city might include some expansion to adjacent areas that were historically part of the original park. Recognition of the importance of Eugene's historic buildings and places could be reinforced with signs and pedestrian connections.

The vision seeks to improve connections throughout the downtown. Creating a pattern of two-way streets would improve mobility and enhance the development potential of commercial property. Identification and improvement of bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular connections between downtown and major activity centers, such as the University of Oregon and Sacred Heart, are essential. Links to public transit, including the proposed downtown shuttle, enhance these connections. Specific action should be taken to enhance bicycle access by connecting the city's bikeways, including the river path system, to and through the downtown. Pedestrian loops along two of the Great Streets should be created to strengthen the pedestrian connection between Fifth Avenue and Broadway. 12th and 15th Avenues, on the edges of the downtown core, should be reinforced as "green streets," with increased accommodations for transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Downtown alleys in the core should be enhanced for pedestrian use.



*A restored Millrace provides an enhanced pedestrian path to the river.*

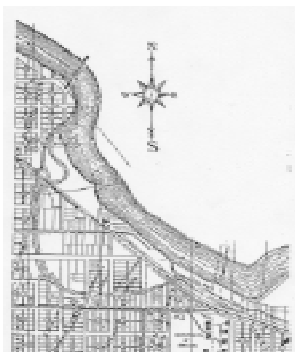


*1909 photo shows East Broadway bridge over Millrace; IHOP restaurant stands on this building site today.*

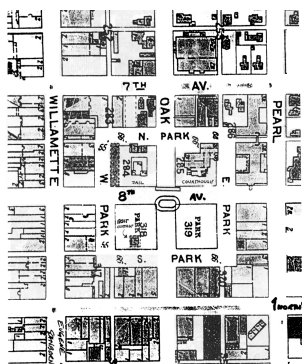




*The bike path by the river is a well-used, well-loved route through the city.*



*The Millrace originally led back to the river. It was used recreationally before the turn of the century; plat ca. 1910.*



*Historically, the Park Blocks occupied all four blocks at Oak Street and Eighth Avenue; plat ca. 1925.*

*“Restoring the Millrace provides a strong connection between the urban and natural worlds, downtown and the river, between our heritage and our future.”*

*Citizen comment, June 24th Visioning Workshop*



*The Farmers' Market day at the Park Blocks is a special time and place in the downtown for visitors and Eugeneans alike.*

## Key Next Steps

- Create a plan for reopening the Millrace (also included in Key Next Steps for “Connect Downtown to the River”).
- Maintain and enhance the river path system.
- Support the recommendations from the Park Blocks Placemaking Committee by improving and reconnecting the Park Blocks.
- Review the transportation plan for vision area. Re-establish two-way traffic in the downtown core wherever possible. Keep downtown Eugene in the forefront of alternative modes and accessibility planning.
- Create additional on-street parking by using more angled parking around the Park Blocks and on Fifth Avenue.
- Support new LTD Downtown Shuttle to connect special places downtown.



# Connect Downtown to the River

## *An active urban waterfront with restaurants and housing brings downtown to the river.*

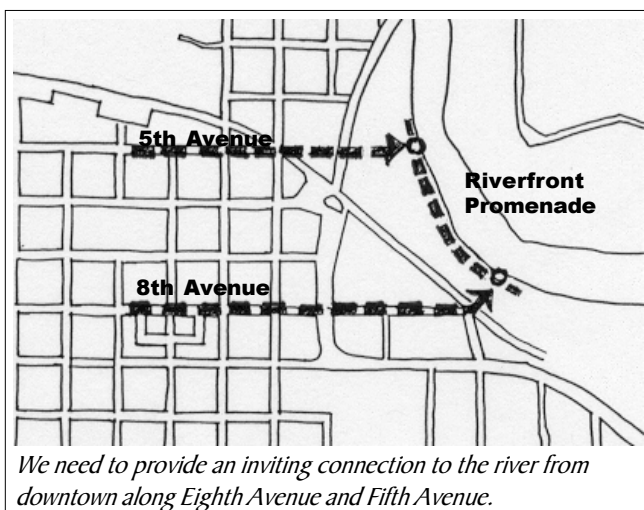
The Willamette River is an important link to Eugene's rich history and a treasured recreational and environmental asset. The city was born on the river; the river was the center of activity. Since that time, downtown has become disconnected from the river and new connections need to be made. Those connections will include places to view the river, to stroll along the river, and to have an urban experience next to a world class natural feature. Connections to the river may be made through new development that overlooks the river or through a new pedestrian promenade along the river.



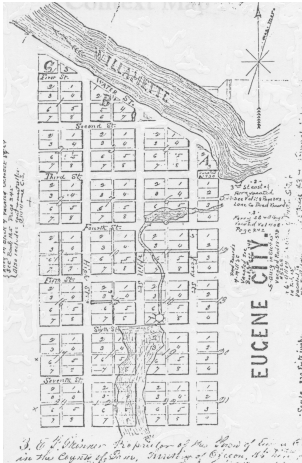
The listing of salmon as an endangered species presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Runoff from inappropriate development too close to the water puts a strain on the health of the river and the habitat it maintains. The goal should be the proactive development of an environmentally sensitive urban waterfront which brings people to the river for both enjoyment and education.

In order to truly connect downtown and the river, the vision calls for some level of urban development in a portion of the waterfront area. Specifically, the vision recommends creation of a public place along the river at the terminus of Eighth Avenue. This public place could be a plaza or park. The vision further suggests that a plan be developed for an public urban waterfront between Fourth and Eighth Avenues. This development should include a mix of public space, restaurants, shops and housing. Any waterfront development must also be designed with high sensitivity to the natural resource values of the river and the riparian environment, and be integrated with an enhanced riverfront bikeway system.

Access to the waterfront area from downtown needs to be enhanced. The vision calls for creation of a pedestrian-oriented, at-grade crossing at Eighth Avenue. The vision also suggests the creation of a pedestrian connection between Fifth Avenue and the river. The vision hopes to further tie the downtown to the river with the recommendation to use art, landscaping, signage and street furniture throughout the downtown to reinforce the relationship between the downtown and the river.



*The Willamette River, across from EWEB.*



Eugene was historically a city on the river. Reconnecting to the river brings us back to our heritage, and creates a future long desired by the citizens of Eugene. City map, 1852.

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*"We need to design our waterfront such that when you are at the river's edge you know you are in a great city, and when you are downtown, you know that you are near a great river ."*

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*Hugh Prichard, Visioning Committee Co-Chair*



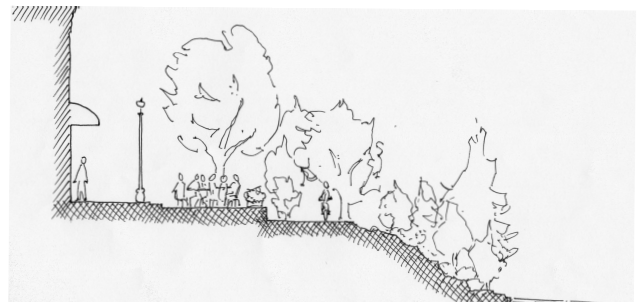
*The new Peter DeFazio Bridge brings pedestrians and bikes across the river, and connects downtown to Alton Baker Park.*

## **Key Next Steps**

- Partner with EWEB to incorporate vision goals in its master planning process for the future use of its riverfront property.
- Create a redevelopment concept for the EWEB/Chiquita/Broadway sites. Include a connection along Eighth Avenue across Mill Street to the river; a plan for reopening the Millrace; a pedestrian connection from Fifth Avenue to the river; possible reuse of the steam plant; and preservation of visual and physical access to the river. Initiate appropriate zoning and Metro Plan amendments.
- Create an environmentally sensitive design for the riverfront between Fourth Avenue and Eighth Avenue that accommodates the desire for public activity.
- Update the Riverfront Urban Renewal Plan to better use it as a tool to realize this vision.



*The vision calls for Eighth Avenue, the Civic Street, to carry us from downtown to the river.*



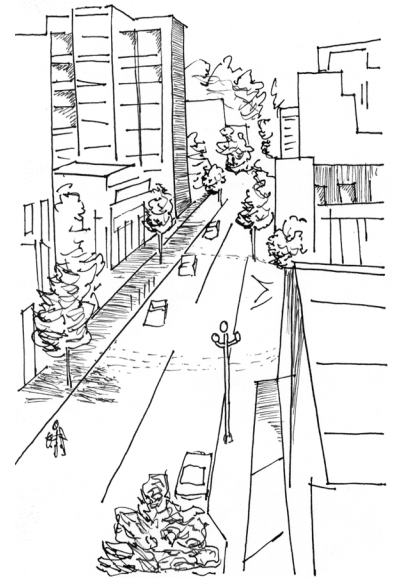
*Conceptual sketch showing riverfront activity, with a landscape buffer at the river's edge.*

# Strengthen Downtown as a Regional Center

*Downtown is the best location in the southern Willamette Valley for major commercial and government buildings.*

Downtown Eugene has historically been the cultural, economic, and educational center of the southern Willamette Valley. It is the business center of the region, with many banks and financial institutions serving the wider region. Eugene is an important government center with city, county, state and federal government offices all located in the downtown area. The University of Oregon reinforces Eugene's role as a regional center by providing education services, cultural events, research and human resources for the community at large. The Hult Center, the largest indoor event center between Portland and San Francisco, hosts an array of world-famous cultural events, including the Oregon Bach Festival and the Oregon Festival of American Music.

The vision seeks to strengthen downtown's role as a premier employment center by encouraging dense office development in the downtown core, with new development encouraged to be at least three stories (i.e., a floor area ratio of three to one). The vision recommends action to expand upon the downtown's regional importance as a government center by encouraging clustering of governmental uses, especially along Eighth Avenue. Downtown's regional position would be further enhanced by actions to increase visitor and convention use of existing facilities within the downtown. Office, government and visitor uses in the downtown need to be supported with strategies to encourage community-serving commercial activity to locate in the downtown core. Finally, downtown's position as a development location should be enhanced by actions to improve pedestrian, bicycle, transit and vehicular connections between the University of Oregon, Sacred Heart Hospital area, and downtown.



*Eugene is the regional center for the southern Willamette Valley.*



*The Hult Center for the Performing Arts draws people from throughout the region.*

## Key Next Steps

- Identify and explore financial and other incentives and resources that can be used to implement the strategies of this vision. Options could include: reduced or waived Systems Development Charges (SDC), urban renewal funds, multi-unit property tax exemptions, differential tax rates, parking fund, grants and general funds.
- Help major employers to remain and expand.
- Promote additional office development in downtown.
- Encourage other governmental agencies to locate their offices in the downtown area.
- Enhance convention use in downtown to better utilize existing facilities.
- Create a parking plan which would estimate future demand and supply to implement this vision; explore the creation of more on-street parking; identify where structures should be located; continue to support alternative modes; and explore how future structures could be financed.
- Develop appropriate zoning to promote downtown development.

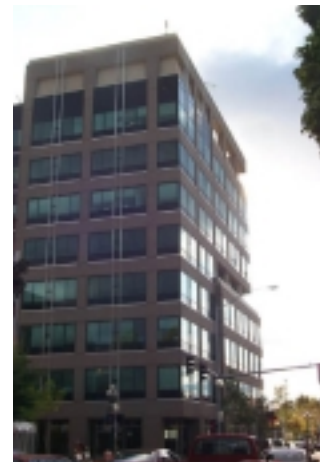
*"Downtown has 977,000 square feet of office space, a 79% increase from 1986.*

*Outside of downtown, there is 958,000 square feet of office space, a 128% increase from 1986."*

*Terry Moore, ECONorthwest*



*The Heron Building, completed in 2000.*



*The U. S. Bank Building, completed in 1998, contains 80,000 sq. ft. of office space.*



# Expand Housing, Recreational and Cultural Opportunities Downtown

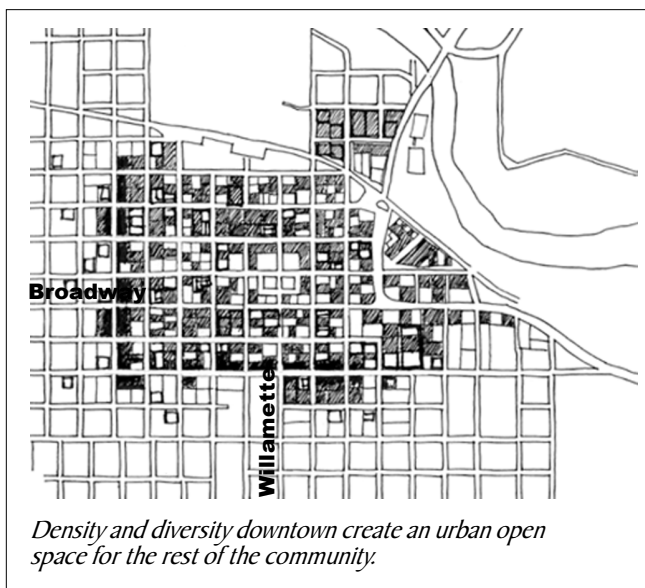
*Bringing more housing into the downtown makes it an exciting place, day and night.*

The downtown environment should be comfortable and inviting for everyone. It should be a place where a wide range of people are engaged in a diversity of activities: working, shopping, entertaining, playing and living. This combination of activities makes the downtown more of a neighborhood, not just an employment center. A city that is active both day and evening offers many advantages over the typical nine-to-five office center. People who live downtown enhance the customer base for businesses, especially shops and restaurants. As the customer base and the number of businesses increase, the downtown becomes more attractive to people from outside the area. More people downtown at all times of the day and week also helps to increase safety and security by providing more “eyes on the street.”



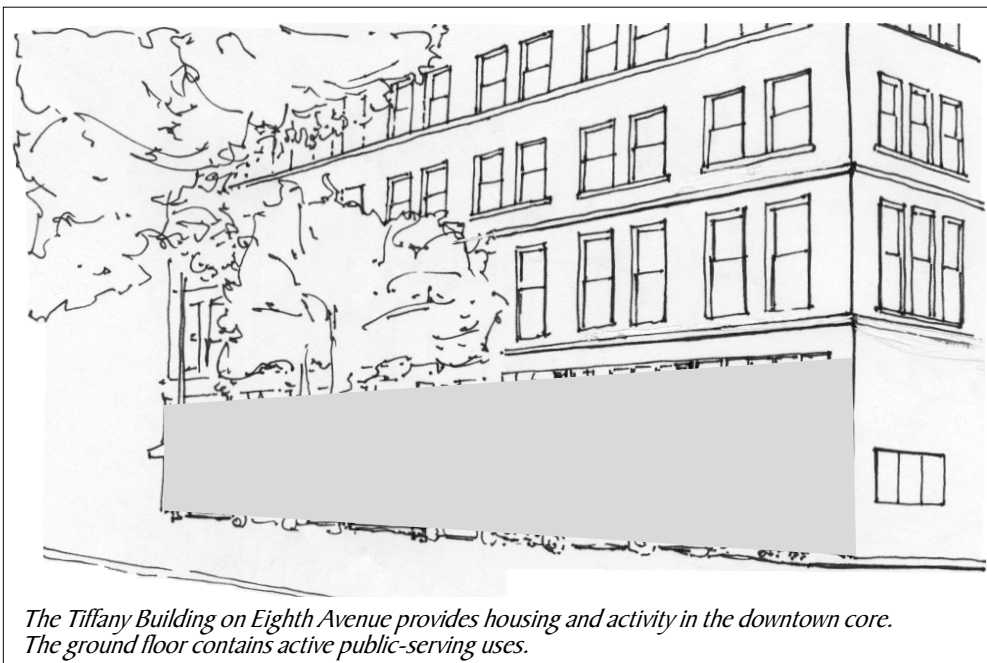
The vision identifies housing uses as essential to the vitality of the downtown core. A combination of aging baby-boomers and young professionals is transforming downtown housing markets across the country. There should be housing for various income levels and a wide range of housing types within the downtown. Rental and ownership housing should be available in various formats: within mixed-use buildings, upper floors of commercial structures, and housing-only developments.

Defining a southern edge to the downtown core, and protecting the traditional character of the Westside/Jefferson neighborhood, will have the effect of containing commercial activity within the downtown while maintaining the livability of adjacent neighborhoods. Housing along the downtown edge should be provided at a variety of density options.



The vision seeks to encourage increased density and public uses on the ground floor, such as restaurants and shops, particularly along Great Streets and areas adjacent to the Park Blocks. It also promotes the diversification of activities and events within the downtown. The Saturday Market and Farmer's Market are important traditions, and the continuation and expansion of these markets should be supported. Action should be taken to encourage additional entertainment venues. Programming of additional cultural or special events, especially within the vicinity of Great Streets or the Park Blocks would add vitality and bring people downtown. The vision seeks to encourage the location of a year-round market as an attraction to downtown residents, workers and visitors.





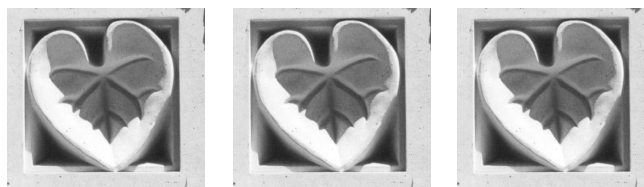
*The Tiffany Building on Eighth Avenue provides housing and activity in the downtown core. The ground floor contains active public-serving uses.*



*Broadway Place, Interior Courtyard. There are approximately 1,700 dwelling units in the downtown, which roughly equates to 3,400 people living in downtown Eugene.*

## Key Next Steps

- Develop strategies for encouraging development of downtown housing as separate buildings or upper floors.
- Develop tools to encourage mixed use within a single building and within a block.
- Research market potential for a major new cultural or recreational venue. Ideas include a new performance space or a multi-use arena.
- Develop a plan to encourage more downtown events.
- Encourage retention of residential use in existing housing abutting the downtown commercial core.
- Encourage commercial development to concentrate in the downtown core and east to the river. Tools to consider include zoning changes and high-density housing used as a buffer.



*"For many residents who've come here, the lure to living downtown isn't a yearning for the hot pace of big city life. Rather, it's for the unexpected pleasure of discovering a small town quietly flourishing in the heart of a big one."*

*Kimber Williams, Register Guard, August 6, 2000*



*Farmer's Market*

# Transform Franklin Boulevard into a Gateway

*A thoughtful design for Bus Rapid Transit can make Franklin feel like a true boulevard.*

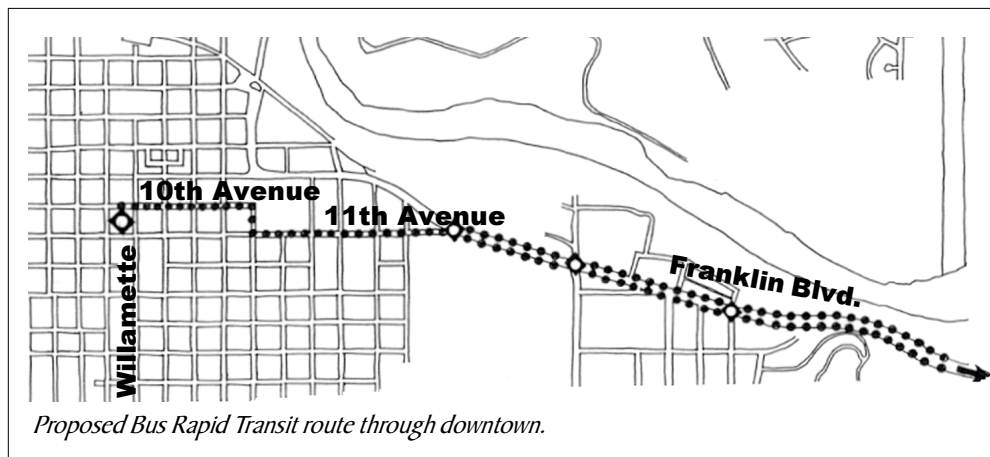
Franklin Boulevard is one of the primary entrances to the city and a gateway to downtown. Its current design reflects its function as a major transportation corridor rather than its community role as a connector and gateway. The opportunity for new uses, development and redevelopment along Franklin Boulevard is significant. Franklin Boulevard needs to become an attractive, well-landscaped street that reflects the character of Eugene and indicates the proximity to the river. The design of Franklin Boulevard should provide access to all modes of transportation, including bikes and pedestrians, and should welcome visitors and residents alike to the heart of the city.



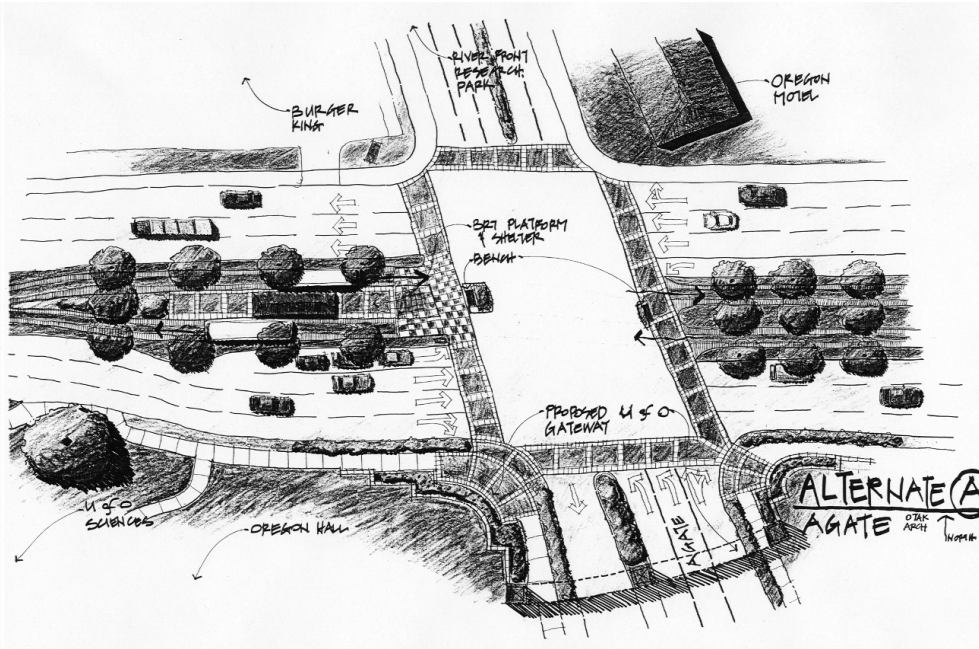
Franklin Boulevard will serve as the route for Phase I of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) pilot corridor, creating a strong transportation connection between downtown Eugene, the University of Oregon and downtown Springfield. The stops at Walnut Street, Agate Street and Dad's Gate, and new development that occurs near these stops, should be designed to provide an attractive pedestrian environment.

The vision calls for the redevelopment of Franklin as a true landscaped boulevard and an improved gateway to the city. The design would include a landscaped median and planter strips between the curb and sidewalk, and improved pedestrian and bicycle crossings. As new development occurs, commercial structures should be required to address the street, with parking prohibited between buildings and the street. The location of BRT stations along Franklin Boulevard will provide opportunities for transit-supportive development to improve the appearance and functioning of the street. The vision recommends the creation of design guidelines for the BRT station areas and calls for the ultimate transformation of Franklin Boulevard from a strip commercial street to an attractive, urban neighborhood.

Franklin is a major barrier separating the University from the Willamette River. The vision calls for the development of enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections between Franklin and the Willamette River. Franklin carries a very large volume of traffic. To improve vehicular connections and to take pressure off certain segments of the street, the vision supports a new interchange allowing southbound I-5 traffic to access Franklin.



*Franklin Boulevard currently has a landscaped median along a portion of the proposed BRT route.*



A sketch by OTAK, Inc. illustrates a possible Bus Rapid Transit station design at Agate and Franklin.



Early in the century, a trolley ran along Franklin Boulevard between Eugene and Springfield (photo ca. 1909).

## Key Next Steps

- Partner with Lane Transit District to ensure that the design of BRT is consistent with this vision of Franklin Boulevard as a scenic boulevard.
- Create a zoning overlay for station areas that includes design guidelines for the BRT stations and nearby development areas.
- Develop new streetscape and building design standards for new development along Franklin Boulevard. Emphasize the role of Franklin Boulevard as a gateway into the city, and the role of Broadway as a portal into downtown from the east.
- Explore design options to create views or additional points of access to the river, to accentuate the proximity of the river from Franklin Boulevard.



The current entrance to downtown from the east.



# Capitalize on Development Opportunities

## *New uses on the Chiquita site move downtown toward the river.*

Greater downtown Eugene has a wealth of unique opportunities for development and redevelopment. Successful mixed-use developments such as Broadway Place have demonstrated the viability and acceptance of the inter-relationship between residential, commercial and office uses, and the ability of such development to rekindle an interest in working, shopping and living downtown. Changes over time in community values, aspirations and circumstances

have provided an impetus for a re-thinking of how land formerly occupied by active industrial uses such as the Chiquita property, or underutilized land such as that owned by EWEB, might be re-used to help revitalize the future of the area. Finally, individual buildings, surface parking lots and other properties present opportunities for adaptive re-use, infill development, replacement or new construction in support of a cohesive vision for the area. A rich, diverse, dense urban space is possible if these opportunities are seized.

The vision is seeking to capitalize on current development opportunities on several specific sites. Action is needed to encourage expanded private development of East Broadway and West Broadway properties to reflect a mix of retail and other active ground floor uses, with housing and commercial office uses above. The vision for development of an urban waterfront will require cooperative work with EWEB to relocate certain facilities from the riverfront area. Private redevelopment or renovation will be encouraged on portions of the site to reflect a mix of residential, retail/services and active open space. The vision seeks to promote the redevelopment of the Chiquita site to reflect a mix of residential, office/commercial, civic and open space uses, including the Mill-race. Finally, the vision calls for the establishment of a regulatory and financial environment to provide incentives for achieving the development and redevelopment objectives of the vision.



*Specific development sites — Chiquita/EWEB, East Broadway, Sears Building, and the train station — all present opportunities to create the vision of a vibrant, active downtown.*



*Chiquita site*



*EWEB property*



*Sear's building*

## **Key Next Steps**

- Create specific redevelopment concepts for achieving diverse, high-density development consistent with this vision in the following priority areas: East Broadway, West Broadway/Sears, Fifth Avenue/train station (Chiquita/EWEB/Broadway area also included in Key Next Steps for “Connect Downtown to the River”).
- Perform a regulatory “audit” to identify and remove obstacles to achieving higher density and mixed-use development downtown and develop appropriate tools to encourage desired development.
- Discuss development opportunities and financing mechanisms with local financial institutions.



# Epilogue

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The vision for Downtown, the Willamette River, Franklin Boulevard — the Greater Downtown — is forward thinking. The hope of the vision is to shape the developing form of the Greater Downtown, to look at how we as a community relate to and use the downtown, to provide a sense of direction and create some momentum to move us toward our goals. By distilling some of the key ideas... the Great Streets, the connection to the river, the regional role of the downtown... the vision renews our understanding of what the Greater Downtown is and what it can become.

This vision is a mix of new ideas and familiar themes. Past efforts have worked with similar concepts and have arrived at some of the same conclusions. The reoccurrence of ideas such as the importance of certain streets, the Millrace and the city's return to the river, reaffirm our relationship to the physical form of the Greater Downtown and the social importance of the center of our community. Refining familiar issues and adding to the palette of strategies and policy initiatives are part of renewing the community's vision and making it more achievable.

This vision is reflective of our community's story, its past, present and future. As the community's story further develops, our collective ideas about the desired future will change. It is important that the community revisit the vision, re-craft it, to keep it consistent with our values and our dreams for the Greater Downtown.

The first phase of this project has engaged the community and reached agreements on some of the key next steps that are necessary to advance toward the vision. In the second phase of this project, we will include a significant public process, and work toward the fuller development and implementation of the key next steps to bring the vision to life.

# Priority List of Key Next Steps

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Priorities reflect the Visioning Committee's discussion on November 2, 2000.

## High Priority

Create a design to open Broadway from Oak to Charnelton which would allow for use of all modes of transportation and emphasizes pedestrian character and enhanced public spaces.

Create a new zoning district for the downtown that promotes multi-story structures with mixed uses, and emphasizes street-level activity along the Great Streets. Consider design review.

Review the transportation plan for the vision area. Re-establish two-way traffic in the downtown core wherever possible. Keep downtown Eugene in the forefront of alternative modes and accessibility planning.

Create a redevelopment concept for the EWEB/Chiquita/Broadway sites. Include a connection along Eighth Avenue across Mill Street to the river; a plan for reopening the Millrace; a pedestrian connection from Fifth Avenue to the river; possible reuse of steam plant; and preservation of visual and physical access to the river. Initiate appropriate zoning and Metro Plan amendments.

Identify and explore financial and other incentives and resources that can be used to implement the strategies of this vision. Options could include: reduced or waived Systems Development Charges (SDC), urban renewal funds, multi-unit property tax exemptions, differential tax rates, parking fund, grants and general funds.

Develop strategies for encouraging development of downtown housing as separate buildings or upper floors.

## Medium Priority

Create a parking plan which would estimate future demand and supply to implement this vision; explore the creation of more on-street parking; identify where structures should be located; continue to support alternative modes; and explore how future structures could be financed.

Partner with Lane Transit District to ensure that the design of BRT is consistent with this vision of Franklin Boulevard as a scenic boulevard.

Develop new streetscape and building design standards for new development along Franklin Boulevard. Emphasize the role of Franklin Boulevard as a gateway into the city, and the role of Broadway as a portal into downtown from the east.

Create specific redevelopment concepts for achieving diverse, high density development consistent with this vision in the following key opportunity areas: East Broadway, West Broadway/Sears, Fifth Avenue/train station (Chiquita/EWEB/Broadway area also included in Key Next Steps for "Connect Downtown to the River").

Perform a regulatory "audit" to identify and address obstacles to achieving higher density and mixed-use development downtown and develop appropriate tools to encourage desired development.

## Low Priority

Create additional on-street parking by using more angled parking around the Park Blocks and on Fifth Avenue.

Develop tools to maintain the character of residential neighborhoods that abut downtown and concentrate commercial activity. Tools to consider include: zoning changes and high density housing used as a buffer.

Transform Broadway (between Lincoln and the river) and Willamette (between train station and Thirteenth) into "Great Streets." Tools to consider: an overlay zone requiring active street level uses, design guidelines.

Develop tools to encourage mixed-use within a single building and within a block.

Support the recommendations from Placemaking by improving and reconnecting the Park Blocks.

Develop a plan to encourage more downtown events.

Create an environmentally sensitive design for the riverfront between Fourth Avenue and Eighth Avenue that accommodates the desire for public activity.

Update the Riverfront Urban Renewal Plan to better use it as a tool to realize this vision.

Support new LTD downtown shuttle to connect special places downtown.

Evolve Eighth Avenue (between Oak and the river) into a "civic street." Encourage significant new public buildings to locate along Eighth Avenue, including the police station and the Federal Courthouse.

Encourage Fifth Avenue to continue its development as a retail street.

Partner with EWEB to incorporate vision goals in its master planning process for the future use of riverfront property.

Help major employers to remain and expand.

Promote additional office development in the downtown.

Research market potential for a major new cultural or recreational venue. Ideas include a new performance space or a multi-use arena.

Discuss development opportunities and financing mechanisms with local financial institutions.

Maintain and enhance the river path system.

# Issues and Impediments

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## **Strengthen Downtown as a Regional Center**

Downtown's share of the the office space market has eroded from 57% in 1988 to a current level of 51%.

All levels of government should be encouraged to locate, expand, and relocate facilities within the downtown area, especially in the vicinity of the existing government offices along Eighth Avenue.

In order to realize the desired density downtown, it will be necessary to both construct more structured parking and increase alternative modes usage.

Due to the higher cost of land, higher construction costs and structured parking costs, it is more expensive to create office space in the downtown. How can downtown become more competitive?

Government districts can be "dead zones" at night and on weekends.

Changes in zoning may be needed to increase downtown's share of the office market.

Transit service will work better with downtown Eugene as a strong center or hub. Premium transit services, such as BRT and shuttle services, can tie together regional educational and cultural centers.

## **Expand Housing, Cultural and Recreational Opportunities**

High-density housing is expensive to develop and currently needs public incentives to establish a market.

Enhanced cultural events, programs and activities need additional public and private financial support.

Many residential dwellings west of downtown have been converted into offices.

Seismic and ADA standards can make the rehabilitation and reuse of the upper floors of some existing buildings for office and residential uses prohibitively expensive.

Perceived ongoing public safety and security issues decrease the appeal of downtown for everyday uses, such as shopping, eating, cultural activities and events.

Parking capacity and options need to be examined for all uses downtown, including events and housing.

Guidelines for building design can help create a comfortable, interesting and engaging downtown. Such guidelines currently do not exist. The Land Use Code Update (LUCU) provides guidelines for larger commercial structures, but does not differentiate between location, such as downtown vs. elsewhere, or along Great Streets.

## **Create and Connect Special Places**

Downtown may need a more defined edge to keep commercial uses together, increase density in the core and encourage commercial development on the east side of downtown.

Due to the volume and speed of traffic, Sixth and Seventh Avenues are perceived as pedestrian barriers, making connections between Fifth and Broadway more challenging.

Conversion of one-way streets to two-way streets, while already underway, will require careful analysis and phasing in order to transform the downtown in a positive way.



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## **Create Great Neighborhoods, Create Great Streets**

West Broadway is not open to automobile traffic which facilitates pedestrian mobility, but limits the market opportunities critical to creating a successful Great Street.

The continuity of Willamette, and the historic connection between Skinner Butte and Spencer Butte, were compromised by the street closure between the Hult Center and the Hilton.

Eighth Avenue, which already crosses the railroad tracks, lacks a good connection to the river.

East Broadway needs a more clearly-defined role as a gateway into downtown from the east. Currently, it is not recognized as an entry to the downtown core because it does not continue west of Oak Street.

Existing streets lack character. They currently function more as paths through downtown, rather than as visually interesting and active public places.

## **Connect Downtown to the River**

Crossing Mill Street at Eighth Avenue is a major impediment to gaining access to the river from downtown. Currently, the only areas with easy access points to the river in the downtown are along Fourth Avenue to the EWEB plaza, the existing crossing at 8th and Hilyard, and from the existing bike path that runs alongside much of the river.

Specific environmental concerns and Endangered Species Act issues must be addressed in our efforts to achieve a more active, public waterfront.

Gaining community consensus on the riverfront design may be challenging. Agreement will have to be reached on the degree of accessibility to the river, the appropriate combination of urban and natural riverfront opportunities, and the re-establishment of natural riparian habitat.

The railroad tracks pose a barrier for the new connection to the river along Eighth Avenue.

## **Transform Franklin into a Scenic Boulevard**

The vision for Franklin Boulevard is significantly different from its present condition. It will require a long-term commitment to bring about its transformation. It will also require a commitment to the community's long-standing vision to create a riverfront path system.

State of Oregon (ODOT) owns Franklin Boulevard. It is difficult to create a pedestrian-friendly parkway with the current ODOT roadway standards.

The current land uses and design of the street makes redevelopment difficult.

Bus Rapid Transit along Franklin Boulevard may require more paving or may make pedestrian crossings more difficult between signalized crossings.

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## Capitalize on Development Opportunities

Financial and regulatory incentives may be needed to spur new development and redevelopment downtown to offset higher land prices, parking limitations, and other constraints to developing within downtown.

Creative financing opportunities or arrangements are sometimes seen as risks.

Development and design standards may be needed to help resolve potential issues of transition between different uses, particularly near higher density development neighborhoods or districts.

There's an intense competition for limited public financial resources for development and redevelopment. Private capital needs to augment these limited resources and shoulder most of the costs of achieving the elements of this vision.

The location of a new Federal Courthouse may have a significant, positive impact upon the potential form and character of downtown. If located downtown, careful integration of uses and establishment of effective connections between the courthouse and other downtown activity centers will be important.

EWEB is in the process of updating its headquarters master site plan to determine the feasibility and desirability of moving some or all of its operations from the present site.